

Translation

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

10 Rec'd PCT/PTO

13 JUN 2005

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/FR2003/002469	International filing date (day/month/year) 05 août 2003 (05.08.2003)	Priority date (day/month/year) 05 août 2002 (05.08.2002)
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC C02F 11/02		
Applicant OTV S.A. et al.		

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.
2. This REPORT consists of a total of 4 sheets, including this cover sheet.
- ☐ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).
- These annexes consist of a total of _____ sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I ☒ Basis of the report
- II ☐ Priority
- III ☐ Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention
- V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI ☐ Certain documents cited
- VII ☐ Certain defects in the international application
- VIII ☐ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 13 février 2004 (13.02.2004)	Date of completion of this report 04 May 2004 (04.05.2004)
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/EP	Authorized officer
Facsimile No.	Telephone No.

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the elements of the international application:*

- ☒ the international application as originally filed
- ☒ the description:
pages _____ 1-14 _____, as originally filed
pages _____, filed with the demand
pages _____, filed with the letter of _____
- ☒ the claims:
pages _____ 1-35 _____, as originally filed
pages _____, as amended (together with any statement under Article 19
pages _____, filed with the demand
pages _____, filed with the letter of _____
- ☒ the drawings:
pages _____ 1/2-2/2 _____, as originally filed
pages _____, filed with the demand
pages _____, filed with the letter of _____
- ☐ the sequence listing part of the description:
pages _____, as originally filed
pages _____, filed with the demand
pages _____, filed with the letter of _____

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language _____ which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages _____
- ☐ the claims, Nos. _____
- ☐ the drawings, sheets/fig _____

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rule 70.16 and 70.17).

** Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims	1-35	YES
	Claims		NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims	1-35	YES
	Claims		NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims	1-35	YES
	Claims		NO

2. Citations and explanations

1. The cited prior art does not disclose the solubilisation/liquid-solid separation/digestion combination defined in claims 1 and 22, corresponding to the method and the facility, respectively.
Within the meaning of PCT Article 33(2), the novelty of the subject matter of claims 1 and 22 can therefore be acknowledged.
2. Among the cited documents, D2 (US-A-4 370 235) can be considered to be the closest prior art, since it discloses the solubilisation/digestion combination. However, D2 suggests neither performing liquid-solid separation between the two steps of solubilisation and digestion nor providing means for conveying the liquid fraction towards digestion and the solid fraction towards solubilisation.
The technical problem solved thereby is that of optimising the digestion step in terms of digestion time relative to equipment and operating costs. According to the example in the application, the dry matter content of the sludge produced can be reduced by more than 60 % at the same time.
Since this teaching is not obvious from D2 alone or

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in combination with the other documents cited, an inventive step, as defined by PCT Article 33(3), can be acknowledged.

3. Claims 2 to 21 and 23 to 35 disclose alterations to the subject matter of claims 1 and 22 and also meet the requirements of PCT Article 33(2) and (3).